

Congressman Hinchey's Biography

CONGRESSMAN MAURICE D. HINCHEY was first elected to the House of Representatives for the 26th Congressional District of New York in November 1992 after serving 18 years in the New York State Assembly. During his three terms in Congress, Hinchey's top priorities have been ensuring the economic security of working families, strengthening our education system and protecting the environment. During his tenure in Albany, he was responsible for the development of the statewide system of Urban Cultural Parks (now called Heritage Areas) including those in Kingston and Binghamton. He is the author of the act that created the Hudson River Valley Greenway, and he wrote the federal legislation that established the Hudson Valley as a National Heritage Area.

Born on Manhattan's Lower West Side in 1938 and raised in Saugerties, New York, Hinchey enlisted in the U.S. Navy after high school graduation, serving in the Pacific on the destroyer U.S.S. Marshall. After receiving an honorable discharge, he worked for several years as a laborer in a Hudson Valley cement plant. Hinchey then enrolled in the State University of New York at New Paltz and put himself through college working as a night-shift toll collector on the New York State Thruway. He went on to earn a master's degree and did advanced graduate work in public administration and economics at the State University of New York at Albany.

Elected to the New York State Assembly in 1974, Hinchey became Chairman of the Environmental Conservation Committee just four years later. Under his leadership, the committee conducted a successful investigation into the causes of "Love Canal," one of the nation's first major toxic dumpsites, and developed landmark environmental legislation including the nation's first law to control acid rain. Between 1982 and 1992, Hinchey led an investigation into Organized Crime's control of the waste-hauling industry that led to the conviction of more than 20 criminal figures. Hinchey also served on the Ways and Means, Rules, Banks, Health, Higher Education, Labor, Energy and Agriculture Committees.

In Congress, Hinchey has focused on job creation, economic development, and deficit reduction. He sponsored successful legislation that secured 1,000 defense jobs in his district. He also supported the 1993 deficit reduction package and the 1997 Balanced Budget Act which have led to the first federal budget surplus in a generation. Other accomplishments include voting for a comprehensive crime bill that put more police on the streets and stiffened punishment for violent criminals, and supporting a strong education agenda to improve public schools and make a college education more affordable.

In recognition of his efforts to address the economic concerns of working families, Hinchey was appointed to the prestigious Joint Economic Committee in March 1996. This body monitors developments in the overall economy and provides Congress with proposals to help ensure both stable growth and full employment. In his first three terms of Congress, Hinchey also served as a member of the Banking and Financial Services Committee.

A leading environmental advocate, Hinchey served on the Resources Committee from 1993 to 1998. The Resources Committee is responsible for legislation affecting public lands, national parks and forests, irrigation and reclamation, U.S. territories, mining and mineral land laws, Indian affairs, and federally-owned petroleum reserves. In the 105th Congress, he served as the ranking Democrat on the Forests and Forest Health Subcommittee.

In the 107th Congress, Hinchey serves on the House Appropriations Committee. He is assigned to the Appropriations Committee's Subcommittee on Agriculture and Subcommittee on Interior. Congressman Hinchey also serves as one of two Regional Whips for New York State and as a Whip-at-Large, responsible for developing legislative strategy with the House Democratic leadership. He is also a member of the Democratic Caucus task forces on education and health care.